
Mr. *WARNER'S*
S E R M O N

Preach'd in

His MAJESTY'S CHAPEL

A T

S H E E R N E S S,

O N T H E

Fifth of *November*, 1729.

MR. WARNE'S

BOOKS

Printed in

MR. WARNE'S CHURCH



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Fifth of *November*, 1729.

By FERDINANDO WARNER,
Curate of Borden in Kent. K

*Publiſh'd at the Request of His MAJESTY'S
Officers at Sheerness.*

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SERMON

Preached at

His Majesty's Chapel

AT

THE FERNES

ON THE

1722



By FERDINAND WARRNER

Chaplain of His Majesty's Household

Printed by J. WARRNER, at the Chapel of His Majesty's Household

Over the Bridge

in the Strand

And by J. WARRNER, at the Chapel of His Majesty's Household

Printed by J. WARRNER, at the Chapel of His Majesty's Household

Over the Bridge

in the Strand

2 THESSAL. ii.† 7.

*For the mystery of iniquity doth
already work.*

IN these epistles, to the *Thessalonians*, the Apostle *Paul*, who had to deal with a mixture of *Jewish* and *Gentiles*, (among whom there was a dispute, about some prophetical expressions in the *New Testament*) was under a necessity of explaining to them, what was really meant by our Lord, and his Apostles, when they set forth his appearance at a judgment, and the great, and terrible day which would come to pass. The ignorant and unbelieving *Jews* understood these expressions as prophetical, of the temporal kingdom of their Messiah, whose conquests they thought near at hand, and the terrors of which they apprehended would extend themselves over all those christians, who were not under obedience and subjection to the laws of *Moses*.

Those among them, who attended to the doctrines and addresses of *St. Paul*, expected, that it would be a judgment which would be inflicted on the *Jews*, who were obstinate

chry

and impenitent, and those false, and faithless christians, who had corrupted the religion of the gospel. *

But the Apostle, in his observations to them, kept close to the general terms of scripture, without giving them such clear and distinct representations of the previous judgment, *upon Jerusalem and the Temple*; which to have done, at that time, would, most probably, have inflam'd that prejudic'd set of people, into an incurable degree of rage and bitterness. But,

Tho' his expressions are prudently deliver'd, under a proper latitude, for the times and persons which he was concern'd with, yet, to them, that understood his meaning, and to us, that must have observ'd the subsequent events, which are so agreeable and concurring, the construction of his words is obvious, and the sum of what he says reducible to this; that neither the day of universal doom, was near at hand, nor was even that of the destruction of the *Jewish* nation to approach, 'till some particular occurrences had happened; namely, that, before the final judgment of the world, there would be great corruptions, by the violent impositions and abuse of temporal power, by such, as would, in several ages, be governours of christian churches: in like manner, that the perverse and unbelieving nation of the *Jews* was not to feel

* See Mr. Pyle's Pref. to these Ep. in his Paraph.

feel the fatal effects of the almighty wrath, 'till by their utmost rage against the christian church, and persecuting the professors of it, they had begun the work of the *great Antichrist*, and might, in a primary sense, be included under *his* character and title.

And thus, as the destruction of *Jerusalem* is allow'd, by the concurrent suffrage, both of antient and of modern authors, to be described in expressions common to that of the final judgment, and to be a kind of type, or emblem of it; so, no doubt, those *Jews* and *Hereticks*, derived from them, were the *Antichrist* at that time come, the *forerunners of that great Antichrist*, to all whose most eminent characters, the *church of Rome* has such an undoubted title. A diligent and attentive enquiry into this chapter will fully convince us of the intention of *St. Paul*, in his explanation of those prophetic expressions, about the great and terrible day, and the appearance of our Saviour, *Christ*, to judgment.

He tells them here particularly, ' that
 ' there will be great corruption of the christian
 ' faith, from a set of haughty, and of impi-
 ' ous men, who would pretend themselves
 ' be the only true church of God; and de-
 ' spising all other religious principles besides
 ' their own, and, trampling upon all human
 ' government and authority, would set up their
 ' own traditions and inventions, with power
 ' and

‘ and persecution, against the plain word of ‘ God.’ Such,

He told them, would be the practices of the *Jews*, and *Hereticks* their followers, in *those days*; but much greater would be the *corruption*, under the grand apostacy in the christian church, in *after ages*, by the violence of an assum’d authority in matters of religion, under its own pretended heads and governours.

In the verse, immediately preceding the text, *St. Paul* observes to them, that the reason must be very plain, *why* this apostacy did not break out *immediately*; in the words before us owns, that the *Jews*, indeed, for their part, began to show great inclinations to persecute the christians, but that the many favours conferr’d on them, by *Claudius*, who, according to the best chronology, was at that time emperor, and likewise his strict eye over them, aw’d them from attempting it ’till his death: and afterwards he tells them, that the grand apostacy of all would not commence ’till the *emperours themselves* turn’d *christians*, and would be promoted by the *arbitrary use of temporal power*, in religious matters, by christian governours.

This is the sum and substance of what the Apostle has deliver’d in this part of the epistle, and we have seen this prophecy exactly fulfill’d, and accomplish’d in all its parts; and the mystery of iniquity, with regard to
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the persecution of some christians, by others, on the score of their religion, doth already work.

For, tho' the words of the text refer to somewhat, which, at the penning of the epistle, was actually come to pass; yet, as there is the same event, in this great apostacy, which was then foretold, so we may very well apply them to that wickedness, which prevails at present, and *in them* was specify'd.

A temporal power has been exercis'd in ages, far later than the Apostle's, by the *command*, and under the *direction* of christian emperours, who have answer'd the character of *that man of sin, who opposeth and exalteth himself, above all that is called God, or worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself, that he is God.*

You have, no doubt, anticipated me in your thoughts, that no character can answer the description more exactly, than the *Church of Rome* does this *great Antichrist*, which in this epistle, is represented by the Apostle, as prevailing in the latter ages of the church of Christ; neither can it be believed, that there ever was a more exact agreement, even in the most minute circumstance, between a prophecy, and the event, which was the fulfilment of it.

Having thus endeavour'd to illustrate the design of the Apostle, in his epistles to the *Thessalonians*, and shown you how far he had

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in view *these very ages*, in which the corruption of christianity has been overspread, under the conduct of christian kings, and by the exercise of their power, in an absolute controul of the consciences, and the thoughts of men: I shall now endeavour to apply the words before us, to *the principles and practices of the Church of Rome*, by shewing,

I. *First of all*, That their religion is a real *mystery of iniquity*. And,

II. *Secondly*, By delineating a few of those steps and methods, by which *it, at present, works*; in which I shall be led to speak more *particularly*, of that, which was the *occasion of this day's solemnity*. But,

In the first place, I shall attempt to demonstrate, that the *religion of the Church of Rome, is a real mystery of iniquity*.

Of all the passions and opinions, which obtain amongst mankind, there is none, that is more surprizing or unaccountable, than that those, who make a publick profession of christianity, should cherish and encourage in themselves a turbulent and contentious disposition, towards those, who are embark'd in the same cause with themselves, go under the same general character, pursue the same designs, under the same guide and leader; but yet, who happen to approve a different method.

Strange!

Strange! that men should be so zealous for the salvation of the souls of others, as to compel them to submit their consciences and judgments, to their arbitrary direction, and not to suffer them to examine, what their own notions inform and teach them, in order to obtain their happiness!

Stranger still! that *religion*, which is, *itself*, the very *bond of peace and charity*, which *insists upon*, and *commands* a mutual *love and amity*, should, notwithstanding this, be made a *great occasion of enmity and opposition*. How amazing is it, to consider that a zeal for that religion should *so* possess men, as to incline them to *persecute and destroy* their brethren! For *that religion*, the very fundamental principles of which are diametrically opposite to such methods, and, in the plainest words possible, do most expressly contradict and forbid them!

How far the *ambition, ill nature, and avarice* of mankind have carry'd them beyond the dictates of their reason and understanding, in their interpretation of precepts, *so falsely*, and so much to the *bane and prejudice of the peace and happiness of this world* (an immediate design of christianity) of *precepts*, which are so obvious in their construction, and so unalterable in their proper tendency and consequences, is melancholy

choly to consider ; but somewhat difficult to determine.

Men of selfish and corrupted views, it is very easy to imagine, would, when they had the direction of others sentiments committed to them, stick at nothing in the interpretation of those laws for them, by which their lives and conduct were to be governed, that would suit with their ambition, and their interest, and agree with the prospect which they had rais'd of temporal grandeur and preferment.

As it was predicted and declared by *St. Paul*, that the corruption of christianity would be owing to the exercise of power, in religious matters ; so it is not to be question'd, but that this *grand apostacy*, from the *faith*, was promoted by the *pride* and the authority of *men*, who were so '*audacious, with souls full of fury, to serve at the altars of the God of peace ; of men, who, under the profession of holiness, became incendiaries, and, thro' the dispensations of grace, effected such evils, as are abhorrent to our nature.*'

Fully to display this great mystery of iniquity, which, by this method, has been establish'd in the Church, or rather *in the State of Rome*, would, if it were practicable, be tedious; but (as many of its professed members acknowledge that their religion is a
mystery

mystery not to be discover'd) actually is impossible. But,

To show, That *it is a real mystery of iniquity*, will be no difficult matter, and may soon appear, by the sequel of this discourse. For,

If the principles it teaches are *mysterious, abstruse, and unintelligible, and contrary to those of the gospel of the Messiah, which are plain, and obvious*; and if the *practices* it directs to, as consequent upon them, are *opposite to the nature and ends of that religion*, which was instituted by our Saviour, the professed founder of their own, then it is a *mystery of sin*, and not a *pure and divine religion*.

That the principles of the Church of Rome are in *themselves mysterious*, or (which is the same thing, in this case) *purposely made unintelligible*, the *ignorance* of those who profess them, and the *knowledge* of them being *discover'd to such only*, as by their cunning craftiness lie in wait to seduce, is a *sufficient confirmation*; however, the *acknowledgment* of their *being mysterious*, from their *own mouths*, which has been frequent, is enough for our present purpose.

But that the principles of religion, which are contained and expressed in the gospel of our Saviour, are *obvious to the meanest capacities*,

pacities, no person, as yet, has so much as pretended to contradict or question.

It is needless therefore, to go about to prove what, by all parties, is agreed on. Moreover,

That their *practices* are *opposite* to the *nature, ends, and design* of *christianity*, I shall now attempt to demonstrate.

As Almighty God is, himself, infinitely wise, and pure, holy, just, and good; as he can never exert his power, but in wisdom, and for sufficient reasons; so, generally speaking, whatever laws are founded upon his authority, cannot but be moral; that is, they must be calculated for some wise and good end, in regard of those who are to be the subjects of them.

Every particular command hath a moral reason, or something for its foundation, which renders a compliance with it requisite and necessary, either to the perfection and improvement of the rational nature, and the faculties of the mind, or to the peace and satisfaction of particular persons, or the convenience and welfare of a whole community.

If therefore, as we may conclude from hence, the whole design of christianity must be to promote purity and peace, *and that it certainly must*, by establishing such laws, and encouraging the practice of them, by
such

such promises, as are suitable to the state and circumstances of mankind, then the religion of the *Church of Rome* is directly *opposite* to its *nature, tendency, and end*. Because, says that writer * who was the glory and ornament of his age, 'As that religion dishonours *God*, by mixing idolatry with divine worship, and gives men too much encouragement to corrupt themselves, and to indulge their vicious habits and inclinations, by allowing them, through many superstitious rites, to reconcile a wicked life with the hopes of heaven, (and by that means is far from promoting purity) so it *particularly permits*, nay, *requires* men to *hate* and *persecute* their brethren,' and, by that means, precludes its followers from the practice of peace, or purity of temper.

For all those doctrines which are taught us, in the name of Christ, or stamp'd with his authority, which would take away purity, with regard to our own conduct, and peace and benevolence towards others, and substitute, for these essential principles, practical atheism, or downright profaneness, persecution and compulsion, debate and mutual strife, are doctrines both *false*, and in *themselves corrupt, unamiable* in theory, but, in

* Dr. Clarke.

their

their tendency and consequences; *diabolical*.

Therefore, with what a mixture of unnatural and irreligious tenets is the *Romish* faith compiled? Where scourgings and outward fastings are preferr'd to innocence and Virtue; where penance and *Avy Mary's* compose their solemnest devotion, and indulgences are granted, for gain, to the most immoral crimes; where crossing themselves, counting over a few beads, and praying to their stocks and stones, and souls of men departed, are great signs of religion, by which they may find an easy pardon for all their sins, and their offences. How far men are sincere, in their profession of this scheme of religion, we must leave to God to judge, and treat their persons, as we are enjoin'd by christianity to deal with all men, with candour, charity, and friendship.

But, however, it is very proper, *upon this occasion especially*, to remark some of their absurdities, to prevent our being ensnared in their holy juggle; in which, every thing is conducted by power and priestcraft, and of which it may be sufficient, if we add nothing more, under this head, that it betrays itself to be a mystery of iniquity, invented by cunning and designing men,

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opposite to the nature and ends of christianity, as instituted in the gospel.

Is it not strange, then, that many, who profess themselves members of the protestant religion, should, notwithstanding, in their principles, be so much attach'd to what is most remarkably odious in the Church of *Rome*, and by which it more immediately answers the characters of that great *Antichrist*, which is represented by the Apostle, in this epistle?

That men, who profess themselves averse to *Popish* practices and doctrines, should yet be so zealous and so fond of exercising a temporal power in religious matters, that they should cherish in themselves a disposition to persecute and annoy their brethren, *who do not think as they do*; that they should endeavour to infringe upon their religious and their civil liberties, to rob them of their quiet, and to place an authority over their consciences, upon the account of that religion, which is *not at all of this world*, but which relates to the particular and the private happiness of every man in *another*; of *that religion*, which is all kind and good, and a continual lesson of mercy, gentleness, and forbearance, the precepts of which inculcate nothing more strenuously than private judgment, in opposition to implicit faith, mutual assistance, charity, and compassion;

passion ; notwithstanding this, I say, that such men should contend against others of different opinions, by the exercise of a civil power, *only* for the sake of their religion, and should preach up negative discouragements, and positive inconveniences, is very surprizing and unaccountable !

Let us then, if we profess ourselves Protestants, act agreeably to our principles, as such ; let us disclaim every power, or what looks like an authority over other men's consciences, in matters of religion, and contend earnestly for that pure, and that perfect faith, and for that alone, which worketh by nothing but love. I come now,

In the second place, to delineate a few of those steps and methods, by which this mystery of iniquity doth, at present, work ; in which, I shall be led to speak, more particularly, of that which was the occasion of this day's solemnity.

Under this head, if the length of such discourses would admit of it, and if it was not impossible, but that you must have heard, and read, both various and large accounts of their method of proceeding in the Church of *Rome*, I might display,
or,

or, rather, I might mention, for I could do no more, it being *impracticable to describe* the several inhuman and bloody cruelties of their massacres and inquisitions ; the many racks and tortures which they have invented, to awe the consciences of men ; the servile and absolute obedience of their followers to their heads and governours ; their various kinds of deaths and imprisonments ; their grants, indulgences, and pardons, for the commission of the most malignant crimes ; the impious and unbounded freedom, which is taken by their confessors and their priests, who, *of all the people*, are the most *luxuriant in vice*, and who make godliness the cover for grandeur, and the salvation of souls for pomp and splendour ; I might mention their scandalous pretence of being the *catholic* church of Christ, the pillar and the ground of truth, out of whose communion there can be no salvation, *the very circumstance mention'd by the Apostle* : the supremacy, and infallibility of the Pope, in order to secure to them their enormous claims of power, and to encrease the number of the subjects of the papal kingdom ; in short, I might mention the ' terrors of violence and the delusion of flattery, the

‘ civility and dissimulation, the promises
 ‘ and threatenings, the assurances of
 ‘ heaven and the pains of hell, which
 ‘ they have made use of to allure or
 ‘ affright men into their interests’: I
 might, indeed, mention many other
 practices which are common with them,
 and thank God, *only with them*; but,
 which are so shocking, or so absurd, that
 I forbear.

For, how far, the cruelties and malice
 of the principles of *popery* would carry
 men, that are its votaries, in order to
 extirpate, with root and branch, those
 who profess a pure and protestant christi-
 anity; the history of that plot, which,
 as on this day, was wickedly design’d,
 and as happily discover’d, is a sufficient
 proof and testimony.

We are now led, naturally, to reflect
 on *that design*, which a deliverance from
 has distinguish’d this from all other days
 in the *British* kalendar, and occasion’d
 an annual assembly of ourselves together,
 to rejoice in the goodness and miraculous
 providence of the Almighty, and to trans-
 mit the knowledge of it to the latest
 posterity of protestants. A *deliverance*,
 from the execution of that plot, which,

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at one fatal blow, was, as on this day, to have destroy'd the King then reigning, with the Lords and Commons of this kingdom, in parliament assembled; *a plot*, which would have been so horrid and direful in the event, that none, but the powers of hell, could have invention enlivened enough with vice to frame, or malice rank enough to execute; *a plot*, which, as it would, at once, have subjected us to the spiritual yoke of tyranny and arbitrary power, *that yoke* of popery and slavery, which neither our fathers, nor our ourselves, were able to endure, may, without breach of charity, be stil'd damnable and hellish, and contriv'd on purpose, for the destruction of the establish'd government and protestant religion. But, praised be the Lord God of heaven, we were, not only then, critically, and providentially deliver'd from that fatal and bloody execution, which must necessarily, have produc'd, if not a total ruin, yet strange convulsions in this kingdom, with the greatest anarchy and confusion; but also, when this nation was almost again envelop'd with papal darkness and superstition, and almost again submerg'd under despotick power and arbitrary dominion, we were again, as on this day, releas'd by the
mira-

miraculous *revolution*, and the safe *accession*, of the glorious *King William, Prince of Orange*, to the throne and government of *Great Britain*; a *King*, whose memory should be dear to all, that have any value for their religion or their liberties, their property or their conscience, of all which he was an illustrious and an eminent defender; a *King*, who gave a demonstration of his sincere regard for the happiness and tranquillity of his subjects, by settling the succession to the government of these kingdoms, in the Royal House of *Hanover*; a *succession*, which already has convey'd to us invaluable privileges and enjoyments, and through which we may still hope for more.

Let, therefore, *this day* be observ'd by us, not so much by our annual rejoicings, as by our repeated gratitude and acknowledgements to that almighty Being, who has been the great preserver of us all.

Let us pray to him, that *our Sovereign Lord King GEORGE* may long, very long, continue to preserve that faith, in its most consummate purity, of which, he has engag'd himself, and,

and, without doubt, will be the defender.

Let us likewise praise him, for his numerous and royal progeny ; which gives us such solid hopes, that there will not fail one to sway the *British*, and, at the same time, a *Protestant* scepter, from one generation to another.

To conclude all, That God may long preserve *His* present most Sacred *Majesty*, our Gracious *Queen Caroline*, their Royal Highnesses, *Frederick*, Prince of *Wales*, the *Duke*, the *Princesses*, all the Royal Family, the present establishment, liberty and religion, from the malicious designs of unreasonable and wicked men, let us humbly beseech and implore him, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord, *Amen*.

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and without doubt will be the de-
liverer.

Let us likewise pray for his mi-
series and royal power which gives
us such solid hope that there will not
be one to way the law and at the
same time a kingdom is kept from
one generation to another.

To conclude all. That God may long
preserve this present monarchy and
our gracious Queen and that she may
highly prosper in all her royal
affairs and that the royal
family may be blessed with
many children and that the monarchy
may be preserved and that we may
be of service to our king and
let us humbly pray and implore him
through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.



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